

# URBACT II

## Analytical case study Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg

*URBACT project concerned: HERO*

*December 2010*



In 2006, the ensemble “Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof” of the city of Regensburg was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. Since 1945 Regensburg is the only intact larger sized medieval city in Germany that has been able to function as an urban mechanism without interruption. On today’s ground plan, the original basic outline of the 14<sup>th</sup> century is still clearly visible. This authentic picture of a medieval urban culture and architecture has been destroyed and lost elsewhere in Germany. The many conserved patrician palaces and large town house complexes are outstanding examples for a style of architecture, influenced by Italy, which can not be found elsewhere north of the Alps. The inscribed ensemble is 183 hectares in size and includes about 1,000 monuments. Out of the city’s 148,282 inhabitants, 15,824 people live in the historic city centre.

#### Overview

One of the city’s historic landmarks is the old Salt Barn, built in 1616-1620 and located east of the Danube river, near the famous Stone Bridge. The construction of this huge warehouse was necessary, because in 1614 the city had recovered - after 21 years - the sovereignty over the salt trade of Bavaria and needed a new storage capacity. Nowadays, the old barn still bears witness to this former salt trade. In its immediate vicinity is a crane that was used to unload the ships, therefore the barn has been described as “Kräncherstadel” or “crane barn”. In 1988-1991 the building was completely renovated. During this renovation much attention was paid to the authenticity of the building. The original structure with centuries-old massive wooden beams and large storage areas was maintained and given protection, but at the same time contemporary architectural

interventions were introduced. The consistent separation of materials of wood and stone for the historic fabric, and glass and metal for the modern fixtures, resulted in a clear distinction between the original features and new elements.

The inscription on the World Heritage List goes with the obligation to raise awareness for the world heritage programme in general and to notify the World Heritage site to a wide audience. To meet this obligation the city of Regensburg came up with the ideal solution to create a public visitor centre. This centre will provide information about the UNESCO World Heritage programme and the “Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof”. Both the population and visitors will be informed about the background and reasons why Regensburg has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and about the city’s qualities.

The official visitor centre is currently being established in the historic Salt Barn. The centre will provide information for citizens, tourists and professionals and will function as a public place for debate and a meeting point for the exchange of knowledge and information by professionals and experts. The centrepiece will be a permanent exhibition, which revolves around the “Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof”. This permanent exhibition is supplemented by an area for groups of visitors, an area for special presentations and an information point. The future visitors of the Salt Barn will receive information about the wide range of museums and other cultural facilities in Regensburg, where they can learn about topics related to world heritage issues.

The visitor centre will be located in the lower and ground floor of the Salt Barn. The main

access will be situated at the famous Stone Bridge, one of the city's historic landmarks. The upper floor is currently used for events and will continue this function. In the lower floor a multifunctional basement will be created, providing 50 seats, an area that can be used by school classes, a snack bar, toilet and cloakroom. The ground floor will house the permanent exhibition on the World Heritage "Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof", a virtual library, an exhibition shop and an information desk.

For the layout of the visitor centre a competition was launched that has been won by the prestigious design office Bertron.Schwarz.Frey from Ulm. The museum designers developed an atmospheric exhibition concept, that gives a new functionality to the historical storage building and presents the UNESCO World Heritage in an innovative and timeless way. The spatial design of the permanent exhibition includes five 'cabinets', all representing a different theme related to Regensburg and World Heritage. These cabinets are freely suspended from the ceiling and the floor and will not be attached to any of the historical wooden beams. This in order to respect the authenticity of the space and to keep intact the openness of the former warehouse. On the outside of the cabinets large prints of historical city images will be placed. As a contrast, the inside with information panels will be dark.

Because of the limited space of in total 700 m<sup>2</sup>, a selection was made in the choice of the exhibition content. The first of five cabinets will contain the topic 'UNESCO World Heritage' in an international and national perspective. A large interactive globe will present all World Heritage cities and provide information about each one of them. The

second theme is 'Regensburg – Urban Development'. This cabinet will contain a model of the city, which by means of flashing parts indicates the different historical phases of urban development. 'Science' is the third theme that will refer a.o. to Regensburg as a trading city located at the River Danube and the construction of the Stone Bridge. The theme 'Living in Regensburg' will treat topics like religion, art, science and the social history of the town. The fifth and last theme is about the function of Regensburg as the 'Reichstag' of the holy Roman Empire from the 16<sup>th</sup> till the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Visitors, whose interest was raised by the small introduction to these themes, can receive more information at the central information desk about the museums, guided tours and institutions in Regensburg that are specialized in each of the topics.

The Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg will be opened at May 28<sup>th</sup> 2011. The information will be available in German and English and the entrance will be free.

### Basic description of the background and setting

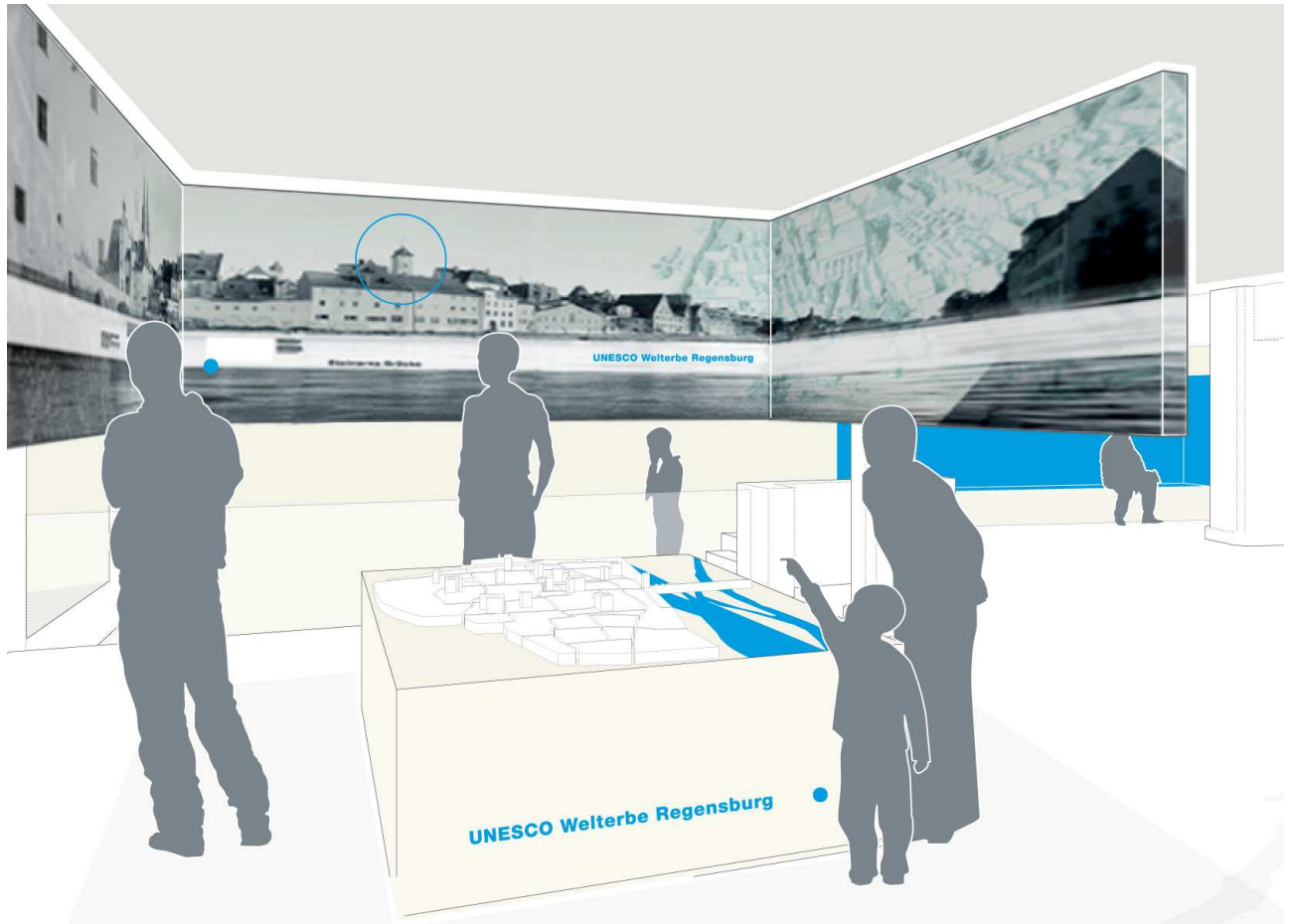
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| Summary                                | The establishment of a Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg.  |
| Challenges that the practice addresses | The city of Regensburg has to fulfil several obligations arising from the inscription of the "Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof" on the World Heritage List. Among the expectations of UNESCO is that every World Heritage site is doing its utmost to raise the awareness for the World Heritage in general, and to make the inscribed site known to a wide audience. In achieving this, a Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg is an |

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|             | <p>outstanding solution.</p> <p>Also, the centre can function as a helpful tool in managing the city's tangible and intangible heritage, functioning as a public place for debate and a meeting point for the exchange of knowledge and information by professionals and experts.</p>   |
| The Context | <p>From the first day of the inscription onwards it has been the main concern of the city of Regensburg to draw a proper integrated cultural heritage management plan. An effective management strategy is a necessity in balancing the needs of inhabitants and visitors with the preservation of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets of the town. When participating in the competition for 'Cultural Capital 2010', the idea originated to establish a public visitor centre in the old Salt Barn. Meanwhile, a World Heritage Management Office was established, functioning as an independent body within the city of Regensburg's Planning and Building Department. The main concern of this office is the carrying out of a proper cultural heritage management for the World Heritage site of Regensburg.</p> <p>The World Heritage Management Office launched the international project HerO "Heritage as Opportunity", that runs within the URBACT II program of the European Union. As a lead partner the city of Regensburg is responsible for coordinating the three-year project that involves eight partner cities across Europe. The main objective of the HerO project is to conjointly develop integrated cultural heritage management systems and implement them in the HerO partner cities. The results will be presented at a final conference in Regensburg in April 2011.</p> |

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|                            | <p>The city of Regensburg uses many instruments to raise the awareness about the World Heritage initiative in general, as well as promoting its own World Heritage site. The instruments used to inform the inhabitants and visitors are the frequently accessed website <a href="http://www.regensburger-welterbe.de">www.regensburger-welterbe.de</a>, brochures and flyers, organisation of regular events such as the yearly World Heritage Day, a collaborative project with the “adult education centre” and a series of lectures organised with the university. These activities reach many different groups of interest, not only at local, but also at regional, national and even international level. The city receives groups of students, architects, elected representatives and technical experts from across Europe. Excursions, seminars providing background information, personal conversations and interviews make the visitors familiar with the UNESCO World Heritage. Furthermore, in close coordination with the city’s press office, a continuous media attention is given to World Heritage related activities.</p> |
| <p>Aims and objectives</p> | <p>The key aim is to raise awareness for the World Heritage in general and to make the World Heritage site the “Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof” known to a wide audience.</p> <p>In achieving this, the city came up with the idea to establish a Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg in the historic Salt Barn. The centre will be open to all citizens of Regensburg, tourists and specialists and will function as a central contact point in which they can inform themselves about world heritage and exchange information.</p> <p>Furthermore the city aims at strengthening the visitor experience. With the establishment of the visitor centre the city wants to offer a</p>  |

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|                   | <p>first class attraction for her citizens, tourists, children and youth as well as scientists and professionals.</p>   |
| Social Innovation | <p>As far as is known, Regensburg is the only World Heritage city establishing a Visitor Centre World Heritage. The concept of a public visitor centre that functions as a medium in the spreading of knowledge and exchange of information about World Heritage could serve as a role model for World Heritage cities elsewhere.</p> <p>The idea of bringing together all offered information about World Heritage in one centre can be considered innovative. The centre will function as a public desk and central point that combines exhibitions, events and lectures.</p> <p>Also, the concept of interrelating different institutions that are active in the field of World Heritage is a new principle. The Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg will function as a central point, where visitors can achieve more detailed information about guided tours, museums and events in the city of Regensburg. In this way, all stakeholders will benefit.</p> <p>Last, the development of an educational-pedagogic program aimed at raising the awareness for World Heritage already at a young age is innovative. This program will serve to develop an interest for heritage among children and young people.</p> |





Picture 1: City Model in the exhibition (Bertron Schwarz Frey GmbH)

### Case: Concise description and explanation of the practice

Main components or parts of the practice

The challenge in establishing a Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg was most notably the fact, that a comparable example of a Visitor Centre World Heritage does not exist. Therefore, the task of the World Heritage Management Office was to start from scratch and to find a totally new concept. To solve the challenge, different steps were necessary:

#### **Step 1** Develop an action plan

The development of an action plan for the establishment of the Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg will result in clear ideas about its location, the centre's function, the content of the exhibition as well as the planning and financing of the project.

**Step 2 Determine a suitable location**

By locating the visitor centre at a central point, it will be easily accessible and recognizable for visitors. Regarding its symbolic function, it is recommended to house the centre in a historic landmark that is part of the protected World Heritage site. The location, in which the visitor centre is arranged, is the historic Salt Barn.

**Step 3 The idea of the Visitor Centre**

The implementation of different criteria of the UNESCO is necessary to achieve inscription on the World Heritage List. In the case of Regensburg, three criteria are fulfilled, which are presented in the Visitor Centre. The historical background of the city should be top priority of the exhibition and the criteria are introduced in suitable positions. The contents of the exhibition are not only made understandable to the visitors through conventional display on the wall but through modern methods and regulated historical exhibits.

**Step 4 Choose a design**

To select an office for the spatial design of the visitor centre, a design competition can be launched, inviting renowned architects and interior designers to come up with an innovative concept for the design of the exhibition space and to present this to a selected committee.

**Step 5 Secure funding**

Establish a budget to assist in implementing the plan of action and that covers all the costs of the establishment of the centre. Note: This step can also be taken in an earlier phase, but the city of Regensburg has experienced that

getting funding is easier when the exact costs are known and the expenses are properly substantiated.

**Step 6** Appoint an advisory board

It is recommendable to appoint already in the planning phase a scientific advisory council that functions as an advisory body for the project. The advisory body consists of professionals from the field of scenography, history, art history and tourism.

**Step 7** Define the content of the scientific concept and the spatial design

In close collaboration with the advisory board, clear guidelines should be developed about the content of the exhibition, the practices of the visitor centre and the spatial design.

**Step 8** Implementation phase

The actual execution of the plan, including renovation works and the organization of the exhibition.

**Step 9** Generate publicity

To make the centre known to a wide audience, as well as to generate enthusiasm among citizens and visitors, it is recommended to generate publicity from the start of the project onwards. This in close collaboration with the media and press.

Timing - Start and duration

The project started in 2008 with the development of the centre's concept and the election of a design by a design competition. The building activities started in January 2010 and will end on May 28<sup>th</sup> 2011, when the centre

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|                               | will open its doors to the public.  |
| Process Development over time | <p><i>The key stages of implementation are listed here:</i><b>January/June 2008</b> – Feasibility study</p> <p><b>February 2008</b> – Development of the concept</p> <p><b>April 2008</b> – Design competition</p> <p><b>September 2008</b> – Design phase</p> <p><b>July/October 2009</b> – Preparation of planning</p> <p><b>June/December 2009</b> – Planning phase</p> <p><b>January 2010/April 2011</b> – Start building activities</p> <p><b>May/June 2011</b> – Inauguration of the centre</p>   |
| Overcoming challenges         | <p>During the entire process of the establishment of the centre, all kinds of small set backs were faced. However none of them turned into a real problem. The only major obstacle that had to be overcome was the construction of fire escape stairs. In consultation with the fire brigade it turned out that the existing escape routes were not sufficient for the new function of the building. Because of the monumental status of the historical warehouse, designing and constructing proper fire escape stairs turned out to be a real challenge. By cooperation between the architect and the Department of Monument Preservation, a good solution was accomplished, however charging the project with a substantial additional cost.</p> |
| Transnationality              | <p>As far as known, Regensburg is the only World Heritage city establishing a Visitor Centre World Heritage. Therefore very little or no reference was made to how other countries, either within or without the European community, deal with the obligation of raising awareness and spreading knowledge for (their)</p>  |

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|                      | <p>World Heritage.</p> <p>During the entire project process, advice has been gained through the establishment of a scientific advisory board, consisting of professionals from the field of scenography, history, art history and tourism. The members of the board were an art historian and a historian from Germany, and a restoration specialist and exhibition designer teaching at the FH JOANNEUM in Austria. The board was led by a teaching Professor at the Institute of History of the Karl-Franzens-University of Graz, specialized in history, cultural sciences and information design. These experts from Germany and Austria were responsible for the scientific content of the exhibition.</p>  |
| <b>Key actors</b>    |  |
| Main actors involved | <p>The initiative was taken by the city of Regensburg's Planning and Building Department, who coordinated the project in collaboration with the Department of Building Development and Service.</p> <p>The design office of Bertron.Schwarz.Frey. (Ulm, Germany) is responsible for the layout of the visitor centre.</p> <p>An advisory board consisting of experts from the field is guiding the project from the planning phase until the opening of the centre (see 'Transnationality').</p> <p>A tourist company (Tourismus Ltd.) is responsible for operating the information desk of the visitor centre.</p> <p>An external company will develop the educational-pedagogic program.</p> <p>Another external company will be responsible for the facility management, including the maintenance of the building and cleaning</p> |

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|  | works.   |
| Coordination mechanisms                          | The project was initiated by the Planning and Building Department's World Heritage Office, who is responsible for coordinating the entire project. The management office works in close collaboration with the other sections of the own department and with the Department of Building Development and Service. Regular meetings with the scientific advisory board and the design team resulted in a clear exhibition concept and proper project process.  |
| Participation                                    | Besides the participation of the scientific advisory board, no other target groups were directly involved in the establishment of the centre. There have not been any public discussions on the action. However, local community and tourists have been well informed about the activities, by a constant and regular spreading of news facts. The city of Regensburg considers it very important that the inhabitants are aware of the project and feel concerned with it.  |
| <b>Supporting programmes and funding sources</b> |  |
| Total cost and Sources of funding                | <p>The total costs of the construction of the Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg include the building activities, the exhibition equipment and artificial objects, the fees of the architects and engineers and the expert opinions and services. The total costs are approximately 2,125,000 euro of which a total amount of 1,300,000 euro was funded.</p> <p>The construction of the visitor centre is supported by grants from the federal government and the European Union. The Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development provides funding for the</p> |

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|   | project to the amount of 1,000,000 euro from its economic support package (National Investment UNESCO World Heritage Sites).   |                |
| EU financial contribution                                 | The European Union has provided an amount of 300,000 euro for the visitor centre, deriving from the Regional Development Fund (ERDF).  |                |
| Annual budget in Euro for the establishment of the centre | What was the annual budget (in the case of revenue projects)?  |                |
|   | Till 2008  | € 200,000      |
|   | 2009   | € 300,000      |
|   | 2010   | € 1,200,000    |
|   | 2011   | € 425,000      |
| Annual budget in Euro for running the centre              | Rent and operating costs   | € 55,000       |
|   | Heating costs  | Est. € 7,500€  |
|   | Cleaning costs   | Est. € 30,000  |
|   | Building maintenance   | € 7,500        |
|   | Special exhibitions (1 per year)   | Est. € 10,000  |
|   | Organisation of 4 events per year  | Est. € 40,000  |
|   | Staff costs  | Est. € 100,000 |
|   | TOTAL COSTS PER YEAR   | € 250,000      |
| <b>Immediate and lasting results</b>                      |  |                |
| Overall impact and concrete results                       | The exceedingly positive feedback of all stakeholders and of the advisory board lead us to the conclusion that the Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg will reach its targets and the ideas will be implemented.  |                |
| Beneficiaries   | <p>All target groups, residents, visitors, tourists, students, children, young people, scientists, professionals, politicians, etc., can be considered as beneficiaries of the project. The visitor centre will serve as a medium to gain knowledge and exchange information, from all kinds of people, so that all kinds of people can benefit.</p> <p>The city of Regensburg itself will as well</p> |                |

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|                                      | <p>benefit from the visitor centre. It will generate publicity and make the city known to a wider audience. Furthermore, residents and visitors will feel more closely involved in activities relating to the preservation of the city.</p> <p>Also for UNESCO the project has benefits, as it not only raises the awareness about the World Heritage, but also generates publicity for the organisation's aims and activities.</p>   |
| Impact on governance                 | <p>The integrated approach to the design and implementation of the Visitor Centre created a better understanding and motivation within the city administration that World Heritage issues can only be managed through the good cooperation of different departments.</p>  |
| <b>Lessons to be learnt</b>          |   |
| Success factors                      | <p>There were several important factors that made the project a success. First, the participation of all stakeholders is important in achieving 'goodwill' for the project. Second, the constitution of the advisory board with members from the scientific world is a good method in developing a proper exhibition 'concept'. Through the participation of the Austrian scientists, a 'fresh view' could be developed on Regensburg's history and World Heritage, as a means of selecting the most important facts for the exhibition. Finally, a key factor for success was the receiving of funds: over 50% of the budget was subsidized.</p> |
| Barriers, bottlenecks and challenges | <p>As mentioned at 'Overcoming Challenges', the construction of the fire escape stairs was an unforeseen challenge. Because of the Salt Barn's monumental status, the final design of the staircase was the outcome of a long process, which resulted in significant additional costs.</p>  |



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| Future issues    | The development of the educational-pedagogic programme.  |
| Transnationality | <p>The scientific advisory board, consisting of professionals from Germany and Austria, had a positive impact on the solutions developed. The Austrian experts from the FH JOANNEUM and the Karl-Franzens-University of Graz, were able to criticize the project from an external point of view, which made them able to distinguish main and side issues. This resulted in a clear selection of the city's most important historical matters.</p>                                       |
| Duration         | <p>Currently the building activities of the visitor centre are ongoing. The works will be finished in May 2011. After the opening, the centre will continuously organise activities related to World Heritage, like exhibitions, meetings and seminars.</p>  |
| Transferability  | <p>The establishment of a Visitor Centre World Heritage is for sure transferable to other situations. Every World Heritage site would benefit from the establishment of such a centre, as it generates publicity, spreads knowledge and is an attractive place for residents and visitors. Besides, it also helps in managing the World Heritage site, being a central meeting point for the exchange of knowledge and ideas about a proper integrated cultural heritage management.</p> |
| Expert opinion   | <p>The creation of a public visitor centre to present the cultural heritage of Regensburg to their tourists and inhabitants is an important</p>  |

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|                     | <p>instrument to raise the awareness and comprehension about the significance of the cultural heritage and the meaningfulness of their protection.</p> <p>The incorporation of the public visitor centre in one of the most significant historic buildings of the city was a good strategic move, as several objectives could be pursued:<br/>rehabilitation of the building;<br/>bringing it into a sustainable use, and;<br/>providing a place for visitors and inhabitants to explore, get to know and debate about their history and cultural heritage as part of the local identity.</p> <p>A further good approach was to involve several stakeholders in the development of the project to ensure their support of the project.<br/>(Nils Scheffler)</p>  |
| Stakeholder opinion | <p>Why is the historic urban landscape of Regensburg on both sides of the Danube river inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List? This question was the main aspect according to the expert opinion of an art historian and monument conservator to create a concept referring to the content of the Visitor Centre World Heritage. To point out these unique features in the context of the presentation was a fascinating process. Furthermore, it was the aim to arrange the visitor centre as an information platform and initial entry point for exploring the city, its architectural monuments and its museums.</p> <p>This being said, it is a stroke of luck, that the visitor centre is located at such a central point within spitting distance to the Stone Bridge, one of the most important architectural monuments of the city.<br/>(Dr. Eugen Trapp)</p> |
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| <b>Information sources</b>                       |   |
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| Name of the initiative                           | Visitor Centre World Heritage Regensburg  |
| Country/region/city etc.                         | Germany, Bavaria, Regensburg, Altstadt (Old Town)<br>Address: Weiße-Lamm-Gasse 1  |
| Administering organisation(s)                    | City of Regensburg<br>Planning and Building Department - World Heritage Management  |
| Contact details of administering organisation(s) | Matthias Ripp<br>World Heritage Coordinator<br>Ripp.Matthias@regensburg.de<br><br>Richard Mühlmann<br>Project Coordinator<br>Muehlmann.Richard@regensburg.de<br><br>City of Regensburg, World Heritage Management<br>Neues Rathaus, D.-Martin-Luther-Strasse 1<br>93047 Regensburg – Germany<br>+49 941 507 4615  |
| Interviewed persons                              | Richard Mühlmann, Nils Scheffler, Dr. Eugen Trapp   |
| Other documentation sources                      | Mühlmann, R. (2007/2008): Informationszentrum für das Welterbe. In: Stadt Regensburg, Planungs- und Baureferat, Welterbekoordination (Hrsg.): Jahresbericht 2007/2008 der Welterbekoordination.<br><br>Mühlmann, R. (2009): Informationszentrum für das Welterbe „Altstadt Regensburg mit Stadtamhof“. In: Stadt Regensburg, Planungs- und Baureferat, Welterbekoordination (Hrsg.): Jahresbericht 2009 der Welterbekoordination. |
| Website URL                                      | Website city of Regensburg<br><a href="http://www.regensburg.de">www.regensburg.de</a>  |

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|                         | <p>Website World Heritage Regensburg<br/><a href="http://www.regensburg-welterbe.de">www.regensburg-welterbe.de</a></p> <p>Website UNESCO Germany<br/><a href="http://www.unesco.de">www.unesco.de</a></p> |
| Main author of the case | <p>Saskia Boom, Lena Batrla<br/>Boom.Saskia@regensburg.de,<br/>Batrla.Lena@regensburg.de<br/>welterbe@regensburg.de</p>  |



Picture 2: Meeting of the scientific advisory board on 19th February 2010 (Peter Ferstl, City of Regensburg)

URBACT II

**URBACT** is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

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